Inside Campaign Experience Thrills 'Average Man'

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ALBUQUERQUE, N. M, Sept. 10—A scientifically selected "average man" from the Chicago area has been traveling with Sen. George McGovern this week for a first hand look at a Presidential campaign.

He is Richard J. Johnson, 43, of 2402 Willow Lane, Rolling Meadows, Ill., and he was overwhelmed by the experience.

Part of TV Show

"I really can't believe this is happening," Johnson said. "I'm so thrilled at everything that's happening to me.

Johnson, a credit manager at the National Steel Corporation in Evanston, was picked for the trip by the National Public Affairs Center for Television, which is filming his experiences for a television program scheduled for Sept. 20

In the course of Johnson's trip, which began in Los Angeles last Wednesday and ended here today, he watched rallies and speeches, saw position papers hammered out and statements and press releases ground out, observed the logistical effort that a campaign requires, and talked with McGovern.

The meeting with McGovern took place in the Democratic nominee's private section in the Dakota Queen II, one of two "stretched" Boeing 727 jets that are used to transport McGovern, his staff, and newsmen that are accompanying him from city to city.

Asked for Prediction

They talked about Northwestern University, where McGovern was a graduate student and about N. U. football.

Johnson asked McGovern how the campaign was going and McGovern said, "not quite as well as I had hoped," and that he was running against "a man who's been in this game of politics a long time."

McGovern then asked Johnson how he thought he was doing, and Johnson said he couldn't make a prediction.

Johnson did tell McGovern, however, that he thinks taxes, the wage freeze, food prices, and the Viet Nam War are the main election issues.

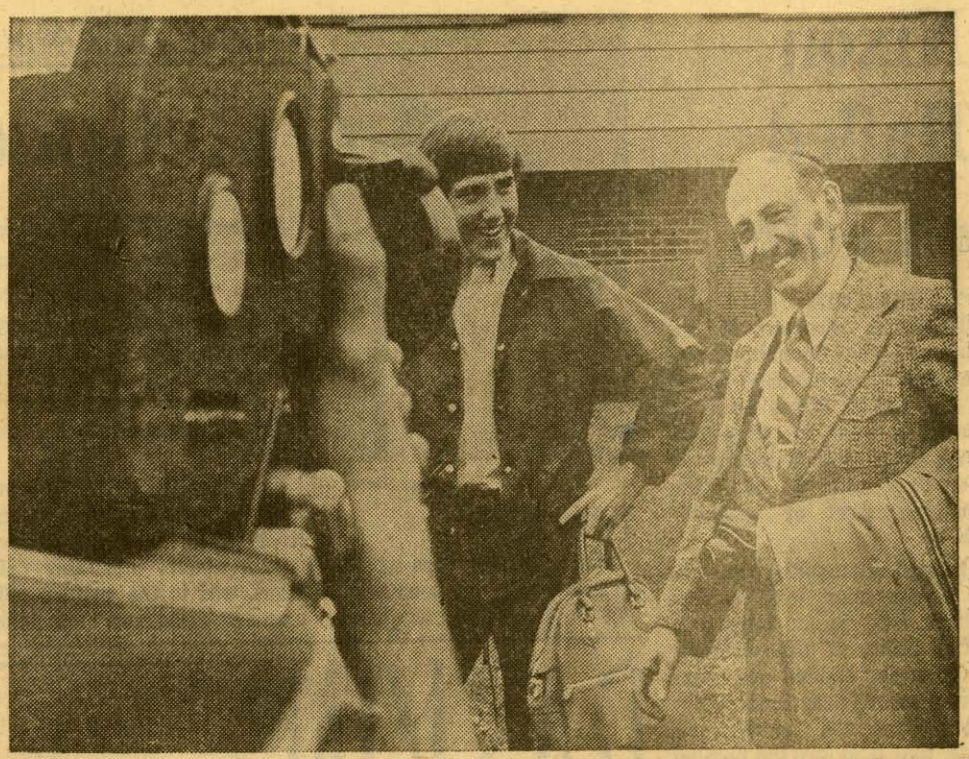
Impressions of McGovern

Asked later what his impression of McGovern was, Johnson said:

"He's a very congenial man. I wish he was a little more dynamic. Impressions are based not so much on what people say as how they say it."

Johnson, who is married and has a son and three daughters, said he has been a straight ticket Democratic voter all his life and that he thinks McGovern is a "very nice, dedicated American who is honest in his beliefs."

Asked if he will vote for him Johnson said "I'm still uncommited."



Tribune Photo by Arthur Walker

National Public Affairs Center for Television cameraman films Richard Johnson's arrival home. With Johnson is his son, Rick. Johnson has been traveling with Sen. George McGovern.